

**MINUTES  
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON  
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, April 14, 2015  
6:00 pm McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, May 12, 2015

**Roll Call:**

Members present: Gary Charbonneau, Jeff Jewel, Molly O'Donnell, Andrea Jobe, Rebecca Swanson, Stephanie Richards, Joe Kielar, Bill Brown, Jana McGee, Jessica Pittman, new members Gwen White and Teddie Mower

Regrets: David Rollo

Staff: Jacqui Bauer, Lisa Abbott and Dan Niederman (HAND)

Public: None

Chair Jeff Jewel called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**Announcements:**

"Bag It" will be showing tomorrow night at Ballantine. On April 17, IUOS will host its 4<sup>th</sup> Food Summit, and the food project will kick off at Hilltop. IU's Energy Challenge is going on, and results so far are an estimated 100,000kwh in energy savings and over 1 million gallons of water saved.

May 16 – Ready Set Grow at the Farmers Market in Showers Plaza

The Women's Ride will be held on May 7 at 5:30pm, leaving from City Hall.

The Indiana Office of Energy Development awarded a Community Conservation Challenge grant to the Center for Sustainable Living.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The March minutes were approved unanimously.

**Introduction of new members:**

Teddie Mower: was a grad student at IU, and then moved to U. of Louisville, where she ran center on environmental education. She has just recently moved back to Bloomington.

Gwen White: also a recent transplant to Bloomington. She is currently working at IU, but will be leaving at the end of the semester to start her own consulting firm. She will still remain local.

**Presentation: Housing Affordability – Lisa Abbott**

*Components of the STAR Communities ranking system:*

Noise Policy and Complaints: the Quiet Nights program includes escalating fines. BPD enforces this program, but HAND receives copies of all violations, which are shared with landlords.

IU and BPD are doing joint patrols in both the spring and the fall.

Affordable Housing: defined as 30% of total income before taxes, but this may be too high for many households. Housing options include special needs housing (including both accessibility issues and/or homelessness).

Programs supported by HAND include Crawford Apartments, Patterson Pointe Senior Apartments, Shelter Plus Care, housing rehab and others.

About 350 homeless residents estimated locally based on last survey. Also hoping to assess local needs for workforce housing.

The Consolidated Plan is updated every 5 years, and the latest version has just been completed and is online. The plan does not address public transit, but HAND always evaluates access to public transit for projects they work with.

Put a big focus on affordable operations of housing too – including transportation and energy costs. Their guidelines are stricter than state building codes.

What are the biggest gaps? Cost burden is the biggest issue, and code enforcement is one of the biggest ways HAND can address this. Rental inspections enable them to locate critical issues in rental housing.

Also work on historic preservation and unsafe buildings. Can't prevent a building from being vacant, but if it becomes unsafe, they can force owners to fix it.

Future plans:

- Increase the number of affordable housing units in the face of declining federal resources, so focusing on leveraging other funds with these resources.
  - Tenant-based rental assistance will assist with the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program
- Continue existing programs: Rehab for existing housing – help them get the word out! Also emergency home repairs, accessibility programs; continued public service funding (CDBG, Jack Hopkins, etc.); education programs (Homebuyers Club, Renters 101 (then eligible for Damage Deposit Loan), Citizens Academy; Developer subsidies, assistance to landlords to make improvements to rentals (Rental Rehab)
- Improving infrastructure in target areas
- Improvement to public facilities – enabling service orgs to better serve their clientele; also accessibility in parks
- Development of affordable senior housing (local senior options are maxxed out), workforce housing in proximity to workplaces

#### **Update on STAR Communities: Stephanie Richards**

Started with Economy & Jobs category. There are 100 points that a community can earn, and Bloomington should be able to earn 65-70 of that total. Have also started work on Built Environment category.

For next meeting, look into having someone from the health topic present.

### **Report from the Chair**

*Update on the Monroe County Energy Challenge:*

The Education Committee is focusing on the Lights Out Challenge, wherein students will keep lights off as much as possible and calculate how much energy is saved. BHSS has also installed PaveGen tiles to generate energy and educate students.

The MCEC effort received a Community Conservation Challenge grant that will fund lighting upgrades in multiple partner facilities.

### **Report from the Sustainability Coordinator**

*Hoosier to Hoosier Community Sale:* Many volunteers are needed May 7-8 and May 12-15 – Jacqui will share the sign-up form.

### **Committee reports**

*Environmental Commission Planning Committee:* There is a proposal coming to the Plan Commission along Fullerton Pike that could have dramatic negative environmental impacts. The Planning & Transportation Department has asked for more data related to the project.

*Environmental Commission:* Andrea gave a report. The EC has a new vice chair, Mike Litwin. The individual who attended the EC meeting last month with concerns about PCBs returned to this meeting. An EC intern gave an overview of the history of PCBs in Bloomington, and this presentation will be shared online.

There is also a new member who mentioned a means of treating ash trees for \$150 or less.

*Bring Your Bag Bloomington update:* The group is working on developing local statistics related to the impacts of plastic bags. Numerous US cities and over 70 countries have banned plastic bags. There are also many impacts related to paper bags, but the committee is focusing more on eliminating plastic bags because of end-of-life issues, and suggesting a fee for paper bags. Bulk bags and other exemptions are identified.

In terms of education, the group has developed both a bag monster and a reusable bag fairy that will be making appearances around town.

For enforcement – they have suggested an escalating fine system, and the requirements will be phased in.

They are asking people or businesses to donate reusable bags to give out.

The group is hoping to go to council in May. The Commission voted unanimously to write a letter in support.

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Next month: update on Health & Safety